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Diana T Fritz 03/15/2007 02:28:21 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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Text:

CONFIDENTIAL

SIPDIS  
TELEGRAM

April 28, 2004

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1344 - PRIORITY)  
TAGS: OVIP, PGOV, PREL, ECON  
Captions: None  
Subject: UAE OFFICIALS QUERY DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE ON ARAB  
MEDIA, IRAQ, AND ISRAEL  
Ref: None

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 01344

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: ECON  
INFO: P/M AMB DCM POL

DISSEMINATION: ECON  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MWAHBA  
DRAFTED: ECON:CCRUMPLER  
CLEARED: NONE

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P 280539Z APR 04  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4148  
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/HQS COALITION PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY BAGHDAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001344

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA, NEA/ARP, NEA/RA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/28/09  
TAGS: [OVIP](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: UAE OFFICIALS QUERY DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE ON  
ARAB MEDIA, IRAQ, AND ISRAEL

¶1. (U) Classified by Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba for  
reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶2. (C) Summary: During his visit to Abu Dhabi April 20-21,  
Deputy Secretary Armitage held wide-ranging discussions in  
separate meetings with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Khalifa bin  
Zayed Al-Nahyan, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al-  
Nahyan (MbZ), and UAE Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah Al-  
Nuami. The Dep Sec briefed his UAE interlocutors on events  
in Iraq and asked them for their support in bringing Iraqi  
Sunnis into the process. While supportive of the overall  
U.S. objectives in Iraq, MbZ was critical of Washington's  
handling of Arab media coverage of events in Iraq and the  
recent U.S. statements on the Palestinian/Israeli issue.

The Emirati officials offered some suggestions on dealing with the current ethnic and religious factions in Iraq, but Rashid Abdullah warned that intervention by neighboring countries (i.e. Iran) would be very dangerous. CP Khalifa and MbZ made very clear that Israel's targeted killing of Al Rantissi just days after Sharon met with President Bush led many in the Arab world to believe that Tel Aviv had received the "green light" from Washington to eliminate Palestinian leadership. CP Khalifa said that the President's statement on settlements and right of return had put the UAE and other U.S. allies "in a very difficult position." End summary.

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Media Not Playing A Helpful Role  
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¶3. (C) Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah noted to Dep Sec that the Arab media have been particularly unhelpful to the situation in Iraq. MbZ also said that he disagreed with the way Washington had handled media coverage of its broader initiatives in the region, and noted that Al Jazeera and Al Arabiyya were very dangerous media outlets, in particular.

¶4. (C) MbZ admitted that his 16-year old son was influenced by the misinformation on Al Jazeera. He said that his son is intelligent -- a "straight A student" -- but recently had voiced some anti-Western opinions, which MbZ believed were a result of watching too much Al Jazeera. "If [Al Jazeera] can affect the grandson of a moderate leader like Shaykh Zayed this way, imagine what it can do to the uneducated or the lower classes."

¶5. (C) MbZ believes that Al Jazeera is the mouthpiece of Al Qaida and that Al Arabiyya reflects the views of the Muslim Brotherhood. He noted that the local security service recently had discovered an armed wing of the Brotherhood in the UAE (to be reported septel). He made particular mention of the fact that an Al Jazeera crew was allowed to film the ongoing battle in Fallujah and resultant civilian casualties, and distorted events on the ground.

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Suggestions For Iraq  
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¶6. (C) Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah said that Iraq always has been a problem for its neighbors -- Iraqi people are fiercely nationalistic and often resort to violence as a force for change. He said that the Gulf states are reluctant to get involved in the forming of an Iraqi Government because of the Iraqi people's resistance to outside influence, including the Arab League. Rashid Abdullah suggested that the USG try to harness the Iraqi national pride -- find a strong Iraqi personality to lead the country -- to surmount current religious and ethnic factiousness.

¶7. (C) The Foreign Minister also expressed concern about Iran's reported attempts to negotiate an agreement between U.S. forces and Al Sadr supporters in Fallujah, and said that the UAEG did not/not want Iran to play such a pivotal role. He reiterated the UAEG's distrust toward Tehran, and labeled any Iranian involvement in Iraq as "unhelpful and very antagonistic."

¶8. (C) Referring specifically to the current U.S. offensive in Fallujah, CP Khalifa noted that the people of that town would resolve the stalemate on their own terms. He suggested that U.S. negotiators seek out the tribal leaders in Fallujah and reason with them to avoid more civilian casualties. He was sure that the tribal leaders, especially the educated elite, could be convinced that the USG has good intentions in Iraq. CP Khalifa also expressed his hope that the Iraqi people would listen to the wise leaders already among them, and mentioned long-time adviser

to the Abu Dhabi ruling family, Adnan Pachachi, in particular.

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Support For Iraq's Sunnis  
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¶9. (C) Dep Sec asked his Emirati interlocutors if they would encourage publicly the participation of all Iraqis -- particularly the Sunni -- in the future political process of Iraq. Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah noted that the UAEG could make a public statement to that affect, but the United States would have to make sure that Sunnis really do play a larger role in the governing of Iraq. CP Khalifa demurred and explained that the UAEG heretofore had been very careful not to be viewed as supporting the Sunni at the expense of the Shia in Iraq. While he privately encouraged the appointment of more Sunni to key governmental positions, he said that they would consider carefully how to word a statement that could help without offending any of the parties. (Note: The following day, a statement from CP Khalifa appeared in all the Arabic and English language dailies; quote, "All the people of Iraq should be viewed as a single integrated entity for the stake of stability and security, and to allow Iraqis to pool their resources toward the development of their country." End note.)

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Al Rantissi Assassination An "Embarrassment"  
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¶10. (C) CP Khalifa and MbZ privately told the Dep Sec of their dismay about the recent assassination of Dr. Abdul Aziz Al Rantissi. MbZ said that UAEG considers the United States a friend and an ally, but the assassination on the heels of Sharon's visit to the White House "could not have been a worse scenario" for the United States and its allies. CP Khalifa said, "it looked as though President Bush gave Sharon the green light." Dep Sec told them that the USG did not and does not give "green lights." CP Khalifa added that the President's statement on settlements and right of return just two days after President Mubarak's meetings in Texas was very damaging to Mubarak and put him and other moderate Arab leaders "in a very difficult position" domestically. Such statements, according to CP Khalifa, "take us back, instead of moving us forward."

¶11. (U) This cable was coordinated with D's staff.

¶12. (U) CPA minimize considered.

Wahba